

VZCZCXRO2164
RR RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHLS #0981 2401448
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 281448Z AUG 07
FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4834
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS LUSAKA 000981

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [ASEC](#) [ZA](#)

SUBJECT: ZAMBIAN MILITARY SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETES FIRST
ACOTA BATTALION TRAINING

REF: A. LUSAKA 886

[1](#)B. LUSAKA 315

[1](#)1. (U) On August 24, at a military training facility outside of Kafue (just south of Lusaka), 560 participants in the first Zambian iteration of African Contingency Operations and Training Assistance (ACOTA) program peacekeeper training officially completed their course. In opening speeches at a ceremony to mark the completion of training, the Ambassador and Deputy Minister of Defense, Mwendo Akakandelwa, commended the 560 men and women for their outstanding efforts and hard work. In her remarks, the Ambassador also noted that the USG was ready to offer additional equipment and support to Zambia if the GRZ decides to participate in the hybrid UN/AU force in Darfur. The Deputy Minister singled out the Ambassador and Defense Attache for their "tireless efforts" to support ACOTA training and noted that, thanks to those efforts, "despite early setbacks, the program came to fruition." The Deputy Minister also praised ACOTA training and assistance as an excellent means of underscoring positive relationships among countries.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Ambassador Martinez received spontaneous applause during her remarks when she noted that the ACOTA trainers had rated the Zambian participants as some of the highest quality trainees they had ever encountered. The trainers, who have experience in numerous sub-Saharan African countries, reiterated their positive views of the Zambian military trainees to several EmbOffs at a reception at the training facility after the ceremony. Zambian trainees, some of whom have had on-the-ground PKO experience in both Sierra Leone and Southern Sudan, were also enthusiastic in their praise for the ACOTA training, and the skills it reinforced and equipment it provided. One logistician, Major Charles Kunda, noted the importance of keeping the momentum going by scheduling the next iteration as quickly as possible, and linking such training to actual deployments whenever feasible (Ref A). Another senior officer mentioned to DATT his belief that Zambia should conduct internal training using the knowledge acquired under ACOTA to maintain skills while awaiting the next iteration. The Deputy Minister and numerous senior officers also voiced these sentiments to the Ambassador during the reception at the base.

[1](#)3. (U) The ceremony was covered extensively by local media, including newspapers, television and radio. The coverage was favorable and accurate, and will assist in laying the groundwork for continued positive engagement on mil-to-mil issues with the GRZ.

MARTINEZ